The Seed Sower.

A Magazine for the Church, the School, and the Home

VOL. V. (New Series.) No. 9. SEPTEMBER, 1907. PRICE ONE PENNY.

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Vespers.

THE day long I have toiled at oars,
The river broadened as I went,
And now each herb of evening pours
Upon the air its inmost scent.

Fast gathered to their mother hill,
The young plantations drowse and dream,
And down the valley, bright and still,
Like golden satin shines the stream;

While red behind their bars of elm
The sunset fires begin to fade,
And tender mists to overwhelm
The pastures with a silver shade.

Till presently there comes to me,
For requiem of this good day gone,
The tranquil benedicite
Of twilight bells from Basildon.

So silken clear, so soft and far,
It seems the dusk has scarcely stirred;
While o'er the reeds one silver star
Remains God's last unspoken word.

H. H. BASHFORD.

I DECLARE that the joy of a perfect abiding love is the greatest this world contains; and yet, if you find not this love, naught will be lost of all you have done to deserve it; for this will go to deepen the peace of your heart, and render still truer and purer the calm of the rest of your days.—*Maeterlinck.*

Humour.

A SERMON BY THE REV. F. K. FREESTON.

"*A time to weep and a time to laugh.*"
Eccl. iii., 4.

ECCLESIASTES does not always give us the best advice. But he is here teaching us by this contrast the lesson of timeliness; and he is also bidding us particularly, I think, not to forget the "time to laugh."

The world has always suffered enough to know its time to weep. Jesus wept. Catholic Asceticism practised lamentation and mutilation; the Protestant Calvinism turned existence into a vale of tears, a time of sorrow and sighing, followed by endless perdition The Monk, the Puritan, the Reformer, in turn have raised the bitter cry of over-burdened humanity: they have felt the woes of life to be so heavy, its tragedies of mind, and its maladies of body, that they have drawn the line too sharp and deep under the "time to weep," and they have always pictured Jesus as the Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief. But this lugubrious view of life has always aroused revolt. Human nature cannot long stand this unhealthy strain, and its besetting temptation is to recoil to the opposite extreme. The Cavalier routed the Puritan, the lover of pleasure the lover of gloom; undue austerity led to careless levity, or brutish jollity, or to the light and laughing philosophy of "let us eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die."

Ecclesiastes implies that each view is false, because it excludes the opposite one and itself alone covers the whole horizon. There is a time for everything. Life must require both tears and laughter, sometimes one, sometimes the other. There is an incalculable unforseen alternation between them: there are ups and downs, prosperities and adversities, joys and sorrows, sun and rain. Both must come; do not seek to avoid them or to anticipate them: but take each at its own time and in its own turn.

This counsel, however, does not take us far. It only asks the simple acceptance of obvious facts, which only blindness or ignorance could refuse. The chief question still remains. In what mood are we to meet this uncertainty of our lot? How are we to prepare for this alternation of tears and laughter? How are we to avoid the danger of being carried off our feet? How are we to be sure about the right time to laugh?

It is easy to say "laugh your sorrows away," but you cannot do that with a broken heart. It is easy to say "your pain is imaginary," but that does not mend the broken body. It is customary to say "wait patiently until the sun shines again, or until the tide turn." But then life's phases do not alternate themselves like the regular ebb and flow of the tides, or the dawn and setting of the sun in the heavens. That is just what they do not. The time to weep and the time to laugh may interchange at any moment, or, in fact, may both be present, and then what is to come of it? The result is likely to be loathed melancholy, unless we know some better way. Byron makes one of his characters say

"And if I laugh at anything
'Tis that I may not weep,"

and this Byronic melancholy was held at one time to make people profoundly interesting! But it made a man a poor companion, and a general purveyor of gloom.

We all need some philosophy of living, some understanding of the world and our own position, some disposition toward the weeping and the laughing which shall blend them into true conjunction, each softening the other's ardour, both joining in the fuller idea. That disposition, that fuller idea, is not melancholy at one time and laughter at another. If gloom without change breeds sadness, gaiety without eclipse cloys and wearies us. Scott writes in his diary after the breaking up of a merry party, "I am not sorry, being one of those whom too much mirth inclines to sadness."

We need such mingling together as the courtier in "King Lear" records of Cordelia, "Her smiles and tears were like a better day; those happy smiles that played on her ripe lips seemed not to know what guests were in her eyes," "in brief, sorrow would be a rarity most beloved, if all could so become it."

What is that becoming disposition, that mingled idea, that rare demeanour? It is not sorrow, not laughter, but *humour*. Yes, humour, which is so misunderstood, so undervalued, so little utilised in the high service of religion that its mere mention in the pulpit even seems almost to demand explanation. But think of humour for a moment as a right attitude toward life.

Humour, in its original meaning, is a temper, a mood, a disposition. As such it may be either a good disposition, making its owner a genial and companionable man; or it may be bad, making him sour and ill-tempered. It has thence come to mean the expression of a good disposition, a blended consciousness of the tears and smiles of existence, an intimate, pleasant, tolerant, sympathetic outlook upon all life. That expression may take on a playful, comical, whimsical form; it may resort to jest and ridicule, and be very droll or subtle in its appeal. Hence people who are literal, matter-of-fact, prosaic—or who are proper, pedantic and stiff, may either miss its point, or see no point in it, or even resent it as trivial and irreverent. But that matters not, if the humour be true at its heart, true in its intent, true in its knowledge of life. Then humour will open many doors which are fast closed to all other appeals.

The most famous humorist in the living world is now our guest in England, and has just been honoured by Oxford. If we have hitherto held him guilty of mere random jocularity, of rushing in upon holy ground whereon even angels fear to tread, we may,

perhaps, plead extenuation, and yet we have been mistaken. No man living has a more righteous and imperious sense of wrong, or has given more forcible expression to his just and generous indignation. No one has written more chivalrously, more lovingly, than he of one of the slandered heroines of religious history. Few men, if any, can have suffered more acutely from private grief and from public calamity. The pathetic note runs throughout his life with its sacred undertone of pain; he prizes far more than the world's praises or complimenting the genuine affection of his fellow men. Yet this humorist has led the laughter of the world!

Let us then make higher claim for this humour which can draw both smiles and tears, and touch our hearts to finer issues.

Humour is, firstly, full of humanity, of large and lofty humanity—not the little stock thing exploited usually under this name, but the great, wide, wonderful knowledge of human nature which Shakespeare had in such generous measure. There is more humanising, civilising wisdom in the drolleries of Shakespeare's fools than in most of the manuals of ethics.

Humour is essentially full of pity, for it understands and responds to, equally, life's comedy and life's tragedy. Its fun is not empty, nor its wit without sympathy. Our prince of humorists, Chas. Lamb himself, had to live with tragedy in his very heart and life. Is there any more pathetic picture in literature than that of Lamb and his afflicted sister? And yet from this man of sorrow, pitiable yet pitying ever, came the finest, tenderest, quaintest humour, rippling and sparkling, and running over for all who would drink of its life-giving water. It was the expression, through humour, of a chivalrous, pious, religious nature.

Humour, therefore, has its own gracious sphere. It is not a mere irresponsible appeal to our lightest laughter or our ridicule, but something far more. "The humorous writer," says Thackeray so truly, "seeks to awaken and direct your love, your pity, your kindness, your scorn for untruth, pretension, imposture, your tenderness for the weak, the poor, the oppressed, the unhappy. He takes upon himself to be the week-day preacher, so to speak." Thackeray himself was such a week-day preacher; and Addison was another. Addison made the *Spectator* a peacemaker. He showed on the one hand to the courtier, with a humorous grace and charm of manner, that true religion was not opposed to good breeding. On the other hand he good humouredly railed at the super-solemnity of Puritanism. And his humour achieved its mission.

Humour again is life's best companion. It oils the wheels of daily intercourse and keeps the social machine smooth running. It helps to keep up the liveableness of life and to keep down its irritation. It is cheerful and kindly towards others; it is often the best refuge for our too sensitive selves, and the best armour of defence against the world's too prying inquisitiveness. It is kinder to turn off impertinence with a joke than with a rebuke. And a man who can tell a joke against himself, or laugh humbly at his own past folly, is nearer the kingdom of heaven than he who sulks in his tent or broods in gloom.

Humour is both kindly and manly, as well as blithe and gay. Stevenson's morning prayer should also be ours every day.

"The day returns and brings us the petty round of irritating concerns and duties. Help us to play the man; help us to perform them with laughter and kind faces; let cheerfulness abound with industry. Give us to go blithely on our business all the day."

Let us allow humour its place and its use. It is, in truth, a saving grace. But it is valued least by those who need it most. In every fine, full character it is an essential factor; its absence is a defect we should endeavour to repair. Let us not misjudge it in another as though it proved a heinous inability to take things seriously. "You imagine," protests the heroine of a recent story, "because it is necessary to my existence to laugh at people's oddities, that I never feel for their woes. You think, because I have a quick sense of the ludicrous, that I have no eyes for grief. And there you do me an injustice." Humorous lightness is not foolish, but the deft light touch of the artist, as in the portrait of Lady Geraldine drawn by Mrs. Browning.

"In her utmost lightness there is truth—and often she speaks lightly,
Has a grace in being gay, which even mournful souls approve,
For the root of some grave, earnest thought is understruck so rightly
As to justify the foliage and the waving flowers above."

"Understruck so rightly," that is humour's full and only needful justification when dealing with life, and truth, and religion.

And religion need not, should not, so aloofly dispense with humorous proffered assistance, and denounce it as jesting with holy things. While seemingly playing with life it is really revealing it, interpreting it, saving it from morose misgivings and perverse conclusions. Life is so tangled a thicket, the narrow way called strait is yet so intricate; we cannot always dictate saying this way is wrong and that is right; it is almost impossible not to make mistake. Why not be tolerant, and laugh at it, and make a fresh start? The best and noblest, the most deeply religious, have known when to laugh as well as to weep. Sir Thos. More, and who better, had for motto all his life, "Fear God, and be merry," and he did not desert it in the face of death. "Is not this house, sweetheart, as near to heaven as my own?" thus to his wife, when he lodged in the Tower. "Be of Good Cheer, Master Kingston. I pray we meet again in heaven, where we shall be merry for ever and ever": this to the weeping keeper. "What an evil world it is," said Brooke Herford to Philips Brooks. "Yes, alas," was the retort, "but what fun it is putting it right." The fear of the Lord maketh a merry heart. God allows a time to laugh. *And* a time to weep: but not a time to mope. Even the most strenuous lives have their days of "world-weariness": even the noblest natures know their hours of sadness. A burden lies on the heart, a weight on the spirit, which it is so difficult to throw off. The most recent and most intimate tribute to the late John Watson ("Ian Maclaren") speaks of the mingling in his nature of melancholy and humour, and tells us that this sense of humour saved him from melancholy and sentimentality, from most errors of judgment, and from nearly every error of heart. Although so gay a wit, he was a master of irresistible pathos. Although so playful incessantly with all and sundry, he was grave instantly at any call for seriousness. His humour saved him from weariness and kept him to unwearied well-doing.

What will help us to arrest "this strange disease of modern life," as Mathew Arnold truly called it, this weariness of self, and the world, and God? There are no longer any magic nostrums, or specifics, which are guaranteed in advance to cure every case. It is a malady of the spirit, an affection of the whole disposition; it is an unequal struggle between the healthy and unhealthy moods of the soul. Our need is some better mood, some nobler power, some clearer insight wherewith to separate out the morbid part and send it to the right about, some antidote to the spiritual blood-poisoning which has entered into our system.

Such an antidote, such a power, is humour. For humour is clear knowledge of character, is candid, frank, searching; humour bringeth good healing like a medicine, and driveth away gloom like the sunshine. Humour has the instinctive faculty of piercing through self-deception and self-pity and vanity. And humour says to us very plainly—Look away from your own self-regarding melancholy, from your weariness which is partly imaginary, into the real, plain, keen sufferings of others, the actual trials and tragedies of existence. These are by them being borne with patient heroism, whereas you they would utterly break down. Pity them first and most, not your morbid self. Melancholy is unmanly in presence of the real woes of humanity: all sadness is silly in those for whom sadness need not be.

And humour says again—Let your pity take form in action. Force your lethargy into energy. The life which is happy and noble rests not on what you feel, but on what you will. To brood and mope is to play the fool. To hug one's own griefs is simply childish. Do something for somebody, however humble and simple it be. "Through

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humbly and simply doing what we can, we regain the mood of doing what we would." "When I dig another man out of trouble, I thereby make a hole in which I bury my own trouble." Then how stupid we are not to see it and do it.

And humour, as nothing else, can banter away our lonely gloominess and put cheer and friendliness in its place. It can and does bring back the zest of life, the *joie de vivre*, the captivating, enchanting force of "all the breathlessly interesting things in this breathlessly interesting world." I quote this expression from a humorously wise writer who takes her imaginary character through the most humiliating and bitter sorrow which any woman has to suffer. But she brings her through triumphantly—through tired melancholy, through weary monotony, through wounded sensibility—back to life's beauty, and wonder, and joy; so that now she can say, "I cannot tell you how much life surprises me. I never get used to it. I never tire of pondering, and watching, and wondering the way in which eternal truths lurk along one's path, peep out from every apparently dull corner, sit among the stones, hang upon the bushes, come into one's room in the morning, come out at night in heaven with the stars: never leave us, touch us, press upon us—if we choose to open our eyes and look, and our ears and listen. How extraordinary it is! Can one be bored in a world so wonderful?" Ah, yes, humour is a sort of balance wheel which can bring us back from either extremity of frivolity or melancholy. Let us not in our avoidance of the seven deadly sins fall into the opposite ills of the seven deadly virtues. God is good, the world is glad, life is not meant to be weary and sad; gloom in any form is a barren thing; sorrow is noble, but sullenness is ignoble, irreligious. Let us then know which voice to hear; let us lament more whenever we are brought to anchor by one gloomy thought and wherefore rather we made choice—

To commune with that barren voice
Than him that said "Rejoice, rejoice."

FRANK K. FREESTON.

Of the Negative.

THE negative is a theme very familiar to science and philosophy, but we need not confine it to these high matters. What, indeed, we shall seek in the present study is to show how the doctrine of the negative, starting in the remotest and most recondite regions of thought, opens out at every point on the plain, practical questions of our daily life. Science—to begin there—plays in this theme directly into the hands of philosophy, and one may add also, of theology. When, for instance, in electrical phenomena, we note the relations of the negative to the positive; when we find that the one cannot be produced without an exactly equal amount of the other; when we observe at the same time the singular differences between them, we feel at once that here is something which goes further and means more than a mere electrical discharge; a principle, in fact, that reaches down to the roots of things. The later philosophy is full of it. Schelling, in the "Weltseele," resolves Nature into a composition of opposing tendencies, an eternal play of positive and negative. And Hegel, in the "Logik" and the "Encyclopädie," has with prodigious elaboration expounded for us the play of the negative in our consciousness and theory of the world. In the mental life the "no" is as fundamental as the "yes." It is the first condition of knowledge. I know myself only by contact with an object which is not myself. The universe for all of us consists ultimately of two things—you and the all outside that is not you.

While upon Hegel we may say that a study of him is valuable, to religious minds especially, if only to show the entirely respectable position which negation occupies in relation to faith. The "no" at which believing people so often shiver is, as he shows, an essential part of our "yes." It is always the road to a higher and more fruitful "yes." The creed of Christendom, as all theologians concur in affirming, was built up as an answer to the "no" of successive inquirers and objectors. In our day the "yes" of faith is being immeasurably enriched by the answers we are finding to the doubts of yesterday. It is the same in religion as with philosophy. The

mind cannot stay in scepticism any more than electricity can show itself as wholly negative. If the doubter does not himself move from his "no," someone else will show the way. Thus was it that out of Hume's denial of causality and of a personal persistent self, Kant, taking up the inquiry where Hume had left it, reached those positve results as to our mental and moral interior which are among the greatest acquisitions of our later thinking.

Our theme, however, for most of us probably, will offer its best material when we come from philosophising to actual living. We do not need to read Hegel to discover how much our happiness depends on a right study and practice of the negative. It is on this foundation that our keenest joys are built. There may, for aught we know, be places and spheres of being in the universe where pleasure and delight are constructed on a different principle; but here on this planet we know them chiefly as a play of contrasts. Our positive must ever have its negative to strike upon. It is after long privation and hunger that we best enjoy a meal; the man unacquainted with exhausting toil does not know the real bliss of rest, of a holiday; only those long tossed on stormy seas understand the luxury of entering port. It is this dependence of ours on the opposite that partly accounts for our strange indifference to that immense life-asset of ours, our negative blessings. What an essay one could write on the sufferings we are *not* enduring, the thousand hurts, disabilities and dire calamities from which at the present moment we are gloriously free! Are you grumbling at this or that? Think hard, my brother, on the myriad bullets that are flying past without hitting *you*. That you have not the toothache is surely something. Here is a world with typhoid and all manner of other diseases in it; with misfortunes the very words for which half fill the dictionary; and here are you, hale and healthy, in your arm-chair yonder, saved by God's mercy from ninety-nine hundredths of them, and yet with your mind intent not on the vast deliverance, but on this mere scratch the day's happenings have brought you!

There is another way, too, in which, in the interests of our happiness, we need to manage our negative. It is one of the easiest habits to fall into, and one of the very worst—that of pondering discontentedly on the good things we have not—forgetting meanwhile the other side, of the goods we have. Are you to worry because you are not a millionaire, or have not the strength of Samson? Is it a grievance that you have reached only this level and not six steps higher; that Jones, whom you think something of a fool, has twice your income; that Brown, whose audacity stands him in the stead of brains, claims so much more public attention than you? There is, we say, no more foolish occupation than brooding of this sort. Why not instead work at that boundless and entirely wholesome theme of what we actually have? Possession is it? Well, is it not something that we are sharers in this wonderful universe? Renan, speaking of Francis of Assisi, has a good saying here:—"Like the Patriarch of Assisi, I have lived in this world without any serious interest in it, as a mere tenant if I may say so. Without having possessed anything of our own, we both found ourselves wealthy. God gave us the usufruct of the Universe, and we have been contented to enjoy without possession." M. Brémond, in his study of Newman, has something to the same effect: "He can lay his head on his pillow at night, and own in God's sight that he wants nothing—that he is full and abounds, and that nothing is not his that God could give him." This, mark you, is not at all the spirit of calling the grapes sour that are beyond our reach. It is one rather that rejoices that God is so good to others, while wondering most of all that He is so good to us.

It would be too much to say that negative and positive are the fundamentals of existence; that the mystery of evil, for instance, is solved by regarding it as an affair of these two. Nevertheless they go very deep. In every direction we note their subtle interplay. We see them continually passing one into the other. We ourselves are a standing illustration. Our receptivity is a kind of negative. Passive are we to the inflow of countless influences, forces, materials from the out-

side world. But in that secret laboratory of our personality the negative is turned into a positive; the outside world that has flowed unresisted into us becoming transmuted into our own will, volition and active energy. Most significant, too, is it to observe the place of the negative—in the form of obstacles, resistances and so on—in the economy of life. We cannot get on anywhere without resistance. Our whole constitution, our growth and progress depend on the impact of our positive; of our personal effort that is, on the negative we find in the stubborn, unyielding, outside world. The way in which the positive requires always its negative in order to the revelation of itself is wonderfully shown in some of the later results of science. Take for instance the "X" rays. It is when the electrons emitted by a Crookes tube, or a radioactive body, *meet with an obstacle*, and only then, that they give birth to the special radiations we know as X-rays. How many spheres there are, beside that of the X-rays, of which the same thing may be said! Have we not here, for instance, the secret of the formation of character; by the play, namely, of passions and temptations upon the obstacle of our free volition, our moral faculty? As Milton puts it in the "Areopagitica": "Wherefore did He create passions within us, pleasures round about us, but that these, rightly tempered, are the very ingredients of virtue?"

And if the negative, in this and other ways, comes so largely into the formation of character, it is the negative also that enters, in the very highest manner, into the *manifestation* of character. The great Stoic maxim, "to endure and to refrain," placed the strongest virtue in a negative. The most potent lives have been specially rich in their passivity. It is wonderful to think of John Knox living, as Carlyle says, "forty years quietly obscure before he became conspicuous." How much more wonderful to remember Jesus who, with a capacity in Him that in two or three years of public life, revolutionised the world, could through all the years that preceded, remain quietly at home as a village carpenter! The Cross also, accepted and submitted to, the only refusal being a refusal to escape from it, was a passivity, the great Negative. But what power lay hid there! To say "no" is indeed the biggest thing often in our compass of achievement. The Quaker, declaring, "I will not bear arms, I will not fight, I will not take an oath; if smitten I will not retaliate," is setting in motion an energy of a quality which puzzles the world and will conquer it yet.

A study of the negative is essential to the art of influence. The great effects are produced by operating on mental and emotional fields that have long remained untilled. The prodigious impression made by Wesley and his Methodists on the masses of the eighteenth century was due in no small degree to the absence through a long period of any similar appeal. The seed fell upon almost virgin soil. Neither Church nor Dissent were doing anything to occupy the ground or to come seriously into competition. The condition of things is perhaps best pictured for us in Fielding's, and later in Jane Austen's, novels. Religion had become the deadest and stalest of forms. Had the soil, on the other hand, been well cultivated, how different had been Wesley's career! The lack of the thing he brought made his fortune as an evangelist. We see the same principle at work, though with apparently opposite results, in the Oxford Movement. Rising in the very bosom of Evangelicalism, it gained much of its success simply through the lack amongst the Evangelicals of the æsthetic and historic culture to which it appealed. The preachers and the Church of to-day need to remember these things in preparing their own plan of campaign. They must seek their negative. What, in the present mind and tendency of the people, are the supreme things that are wanting? Where is the chief hunger that waits to be fed? It may vary largely in this place or that. Here an overdriven emotionalism needs to be balanced with clearer moral definition; there a long indifference waits to be stirred by spiritual passion. The Church that wins is the Church that sees and meets the want of the time.

One of the most suggestive sides of this theme lies in its application to personality, and, connected with that, the doctrine of a future life. Psychology now recognises a double consciousness in us, what is called a personal and a general. The first is that comprised in the sphere of our actual "aware-

ness"; of the things we see, feel, or otherwise recognise. But behind this there is a part of us where all our antecedent experiences are piled up, where all our sensations are registered—a vast realm of our being compared with which the immediately conscious part is as the piece of the iceberg which projects above the ocean to the far mightier bulk beneath.

In other words, we may speak of our personality as a positive and a negative, the first known and the second largely unknown. How the two are related we can at present only conjecture, but their possible combinations open a field for immortal hopes. To follow an illustration used by Sir Oliver Lodge, the positive consciousness may be to the larger one behind as a magnet is to the inert magnetism of the bar of steel on which it plays. The magnetic force was already in the bar, but in closed curves, which under this influence are now opened and made active. From the lapse of time or other circumstances, these loops may close again and the activity of the magnet cease. But the magnetism of the bar is not really dead. It has a perpetual existence, and may be called into activity again. Who shall say but that the parallel holds here between our conscious and our unconscious self; that death is simply the closing of one side of our activity, leaving the other and larger untouched? Who shall say, in fact, that science, travelling its own road, is not striking here into the path of the New Testament and the spiritual sense, affirming with them "the resurrection of the dead and the life everlasting?"—(From the *Christian World*.) J. B.

"The Secret Fancies of a Business Man" * is a volume of verse, serious and humorous, by Mr. James Beard, and will welcomed by a wide circle of friends as a revelation of the inner life and thought of an honoured comrade and loyal-hearted friend. Mr. Beard's muse is not of the fiery, flaming kind. She is a gentle creature, with kindly smiles and a pleasant *tête-a-tête* manner, and sits down with us on a homely bench to discourse on the eternal theme of love and beauty. May the author long live to indulge his "secret fancies."

* Published by Sherratt and Hughes. London, 60, Chandos St. 2/6.

Two Summer Days.

In hope I climbed the grassy stair,
Green hills in sunshine glancing;
A thousand grasses blossomed fair,
The breezes set them dancing.
Each seemed a happy soul to be,
Rejoicing with the summer;
I smiled to think they danced for me,
And every glad new-comer.

But ah! a rapture greater still,
Below, my heart awaited;
It was the self-same grassy hill,
How wondrously translated!
It seemed that gems had dropped in showers,
The hill with glory lining;
'Twas but a crowd of sorrel flowers,
Through which the sun was shining!

Each little flower, with ruby wings,
Moved to a rhythmic measure;
Spell-bound, I watched the lovely things,
As one surveys his treasure.
I danced, I sang, I could not choose
But of their brightness borrow;
I felt as if I should not lose
That joy in any sorrow!

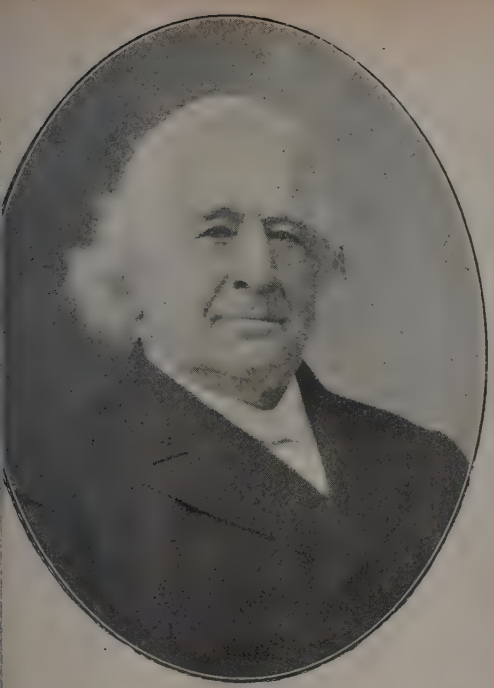
Downcast, I trod the self-same way,
The summer hardly older;
But ah! how different seemed the day
To me, a sad beholder!
No light lies on the hill-tops now,
No music stirs the grasses;
The very insects seem to know
That some sad spirit passes!

I reached at last the lovely place
Where late I paused in rapture;
In vain I gazed, with wistful face,
No glow could I recapture.
The sorrel flowers were growing there,
Not one perhaps had vanished;
But ah! the cloud of my despair
Their gracious joy had banished!

M. Betham-Edwards.

Religion, when deepest and most vital, will have little impulse or need to "tell its experience." Its experiences—all that are meant for the public—are as manifest as ripened fruit which hangs to your sight and reach on the tree that has borne it.—*W. J. Potter.*

Work is the true friend and consoler of man, raises him above all his weaknesses, purifies and ennobles him, saves him from vulgar temptation, and helps him to bear his burden through days of sadness, and before which even the deepest griefs give way for a time.—*M. Caro.*



Robert Collyer, D.D.

We have pleasure in giving a portrait of Dr. Collyer, of New York, who is paying a visit to this country. Although Dr. Collyer is in his 84th year, his eye is not dimmed nor his natural force abated. He has come over the water to open a Free Library, the gift of Mr. Carnegie at Ilkley, his native place in Yorkshire. He will be here in September, and we understand he has kindly consented to preach in Leeds and Birmingham. We give him the heartiest of welcomes.

The strength of your life is measured by the strength of your will. But the strength of your will is just the strength of the wish that lies behind it.—*Henry Van Dyke.*

* Unitarian Christianity and the New Theology.

This little volume consists of five sermons, preached by Mr. Worsley Austin, in Birmingham, at the time of the publication of Mr. Campbell's book. It is offered to the public "in the hope that it will find its way into the hands of some who are now inquiring as to the faith held and taught by Unitarians." The author rightly says "there is much misconception abroad, and the real significance of our Church in the community is not widely understood." At the same time Mr. Austin frankly acknowledges the difficulty of presenting the views and opinions of a religious community having no authoritative creed. He thinks, however, that among Unitarians there is a certain "consensus of belief," of which he endeavours to give an account. He goes further, and avers that "the amount of common prevailing beliefs is really greater with us, I should say, than with any other religious community." Well, Congregationalists have often made the same claims and on grounds just as good. Seeing that opinions among Unitarians vary—all the way from the boldest Theism, in which "the idea of God is defacated to a pure transparency," right up to a Christology only divided by the thinnest of lines from that of the Nicene creed—we do not think much is gained by asserting a "consensus of beliefs." Unitarianism has a better ground of boasting in its variety of beliefs. The fact is each man must speak for himself, and it may be said of Unitarianism, as was once said of Christianity, that no man's account of it exactly fitted any other.

What we have here, then, is Mr. Austin's exposition of Unitarian Christianity, and a very able, delightful, and readable affair it is. As specimens of the best kind of preaching these five sermons may be commended to all ministers. They are the words of an earnest, cultured, deeply religious man, and the congregation is to be congratulated to which such sermons are offered. We would, however, suggest to Mr. Austin that the peculiar and distinguished thing about mod-

* "Unitarian Christianity and the New Theology." By J. Worsley Austin. Birmingham, Cornish Bros. 1/-.

ern Unitarianism is not the conclusion it has arrived at concerning Christianity, but its method of approaching and investigating all the religious problems, *i.e.*, the method known as Rationalism, or in simpler guise, the method of the Free Spirit. The conclusion which the use of that method may reach will differ in different minds, and will vary in importance. But if the name Unitarian is to be emptied of its old doctrinal and historical import, and it is to be used in a wider sense, that wider sense surely signifies in the first place the adoption of a certain attitude of mind and a certain method of enquiry. That Mr. Austin is alive to this aspect of the case is seen in a fine passage from the second of his discourses; in which answering the question, "What is Religion?" he says:—

"Our conception of religion is not of something which is peculiar to one country or one age, much less can we believe that a particular community that draws up its articles and dogmas has its secret and power in its keeping. It ('religion') is a world-wide power, a great elemental Divine impulse in man, the power of God in human life. We wish to treat it as such, to let it bring forth its truest and best points in human life to-day. We wish this development still to go on, and that is why there must be *an open road*—why all that fetters and obstructs and hinders must be deprived of its fettering and obstructing power—that is why there must be *liberty*. It is this trust in the Divine impulse, this trust in Religion, as a greater, more lasting, more powerful thing than any of its particular phases—this trust of the movement of God in the soul which is to lead us on to yet more light and truth—it is this that makes us count a creed that would set limits to human thought and inspiration, that would bar the pathway of human advance, as a menace to our highest welfare, to life itself." That, so far as we understand it, is what Liberalism in Religion stands for—*the open road, the Free Spirit, the utmost liberty of enquiry*—a road, a spirit, a liberty, which have for their only guide and authority the Court of Reason. So far as Unitarianism takes its place in the great Liberal movement of the times, that also is its meaning. But we have no reason to suppose that loyalty to the open road and the free spirit will lead all men to the same interpretation of Christianity. The same method may work to bring about different theological conclusions. It is the advance of this method we see and have in the New Theology. Mr. Austin's book would have gained in power and directness if this had been kept steadily in view. As it is, he has given us an interpretation of Christianity which is eminently beautiful and persuasive, and to which many among us will yield a glad response, but which is by no means peculiar to Unitarianism. Unitarianism, so far as we can judge, is a method, not a theology. In Mr. Austin's own words, it stands for *the open road*.

Church Music.

Soft, through the rich illumined panes,
All down the aisle the sunlight rains,
And sets in red and purple stains.

And mid this glory from the skies,
We hear the organ-voice arise.
Its wings the waking spirit tries:

It flutters, but it cannot soar.
Oh! heavenly music, let us pour
Our woes, our joys, in thee once more.

All wilt thou take. Thou mak'st no choice.
Hearts that complain, hearts that rejoice,
Find thee their all-revealing voice.

All, all the soul's unuttered things
Thou bearest on thy mighty wings
Up, up until the arched roof rings:

Now soft—as when for Israel's King,
Young David swept his sweet harp-string;
Now loud—as angels antheming.

It dies. The last low strain departs.
With deep "Amen" the warm tear starts.
The peace of Eden fills our hearts.

Katherine Saunders.

I find that there is no worthy pursuit but the idea of doing some good to the world. Some do it with their society, some with their wit, some with their benevolence, some with a sort of power of conferring pleasure and good humour on all they meet.—*John Keats*.

Notes and Jottings.

It is a long lane that has no turning; but the wise people who, depending on the old adage, trusted a turn of fine weather would come at last in August, have suffered disappointment. It is, however, a little too soon to speak with assurance. These notes are written in obedience to the Editor's behest (he has himself run away to Switzerland beyond the reach of expostulation!) before the end of the lazy month, and in that remote district of Wales which "Allen Raine" has described with such simple charm in her delightful stories. There is one thing quite positively settled here, spite of Welsh Revivals and Summer Schools of New Theology, and that is the unsettledness, the unchanging changeableness, of the weather.

* * * * *

One does not pity the holiday-maker so much as the poor farmer, who has at last a solid (or at least a liquid) grievance about which to grumble. It is true that he would have grumbled in any case. Somewhat like a savage flogging his idol, the farmer must be ever railing at Providence, but there is now a new tone of sincerity in the complaining, for the hay is black in the fields and the corn is beaten down and matted by wind and rain.

* * * * *

As for the holiday maker, he is a poor sort of fabric if he shrinks in the wet. No one but an unpardonably towney tourist can fail to enjoy himself as, drenched to the skin, he walks across a Yorkshire moor, say from Swale Dale into Wensley Dale, or eludes the keepers of Kinder Scout while the storm stings him into glowing life. What Cockney would deny that rainy holidays afford undreamt delights; and how bored we should all become if we had nothing but the recurring monotony of days of cloudless skies, calm blue seas, and the intolerable fervour of summer heat!

* * * * *

For holiday purposes, whatever is, is best. A soaking mist, a thunder-shower, a steady drizzle, afford distinct pleasures of their own, and give new shapes and shadows to the view—what there is of it. And yet a clever advocate might be found who could make out at least a plausible case for the old-fashioned yellow sands, sea-dreams, and a blazing sun.

* * * * *

It was probably this latter prospect, even more perhaps than serious study, that gathered together a "Summer School" of New Theology in Penmaenmawr. I never quite made out from the newspaper reports whether Dr. Rashdall, who somehow lost himself in the wild fastnesses of Mid-Wales, ever succeeded in finding the "School." At any rate he failed to arrive in scheduled time, and his place had to be taken at a moment's notice by Dr. Crapsey, the notorious American heretic. There were some conspicuous abstentions from the meetings. And why was it that Unitarians did not appear among the appointed speakers? Did they decline after being invited? Or was it that the New Theology showed the character of its catholicity and the courage of its liberalism by snubbing them? One member of our National Conference, Dr. John Hunter, was apparently the sole link between ourselves and the organisers of this movement.

* * * * *

The absence of avowed Unitarians from the list of recognised speakers cannot but be pronounced as anything but regrettable. It suggests that the New Theology is already beginning to recognise the existence of "heresy" in a group of men, many of whom are more "orthodox" and more "Christian" in doctrine than the New Theology men themselves. If it be the deliberate policy of this movement to ignore us even on occasions like this, when it would be so easy to appear together on a common platform, this narrow exclusiveness will prove a most damaging commentary on its claim to sincerity and courage.

* * * * *

The New Theology men have of course a perfect right to form their own circle; and as a mere matter of ecclesiastical diplomacy it might appear at first sight as if they stood to gain by not associating with Unitarians. But a deeper view will surely show that an exclusiveness based on no principle, and dictated only by the fear of unpopularity, will lay them open to be despised by the strong consistent men of both the right and the left

wings. They are the best friends of the New Theology who will urge its leaders to be true to their vision, and to shun even the appearance of moral cowardice.

* * * * *

Among the books which I packed in my holiday-bag was Father Tyrrell's new volume, entitled, "Through Scylla and Charybdis, or The Old Theology and The New." If I can induce anyone who would have passed it by to study it carefully I shall confer a real boon on the reader. It has a noble elevation of moral tone, a fine literary style that is in itself a delight, and a penetrating subtlety of thought that plays luminously over and through many of our modern difficulties. The book is, in a sense, Father Tyrrell's final appeal to the "rigidity of Rome," his last defence and demand for a wider and more generous outlook.

* * * * *

"If," he writes in the preface, "with this volume, as far as apologetic and defence are concerned, I throw down my cards on the table, it is not because I believe the game quite desperate, or the hand quite impossible, but rather in the hope that, hereafter, should reason and sobriety become audible once more, some more skilful player may perhaps take them up and turn them to better account. . . . The task has grown beyond my tastes and my powers; and needs stronger and rougher handling. I am no surgeon, and where surgery is inevitable, homœopathy is mere idling." Did ever Roman priest, while still within the fold, talk like this before?

* * * * *

Or, let us read this fine paragraph, "There is always a minority, a saving leaven, whose judgment is in truth the judgment of God, and before whom we stand as before an invisible eye that watches and judges, condemns or acquits. Higher than the highest official tribunal, its silent approval should be our greatest ambition, its silent censure our deepest dread. To wish to justify ourselves at its bar is no weakness; to fear its censure, no dishonour. For in it we recognise the highest expression of the Divine within us—of our better self, of our conscience."

Here is indeed the keynote of this new *Apologia pro vita sua*, which no one who desires to acquaint himself with really important books will overlook.

J. M. Lloyd Thomas.

The Uplifting Motive.

From of old one of the best working instrumentalities for lifting man above the fears, frets, and jealousies which so easily beset him, and giving him fortitude and peace wherever he may be placed, is the religious motive.

A great historian has spoken of religion as "the one romance of the poor," but for multitudes of those not poor it may be a revealer of poetry amid what were otherwise sordid prose. The religious motive is not, as some would insist, a thing merely handed down from some dim past, a tradition only: the most of us have it in some form, if only in the rudimentary savage form of a lurking superstition. For every one of us of any wide experience of life discovers that he is surrounded by a world of mystery which he cannot control or count upon, and if he does not give it a rational interpretation he entertains toward it some terror.

People of dull sensibilities and low morals, men of sceptical and materialistic mood, believe in omens, in luck, fate, or devils. At least the number of thirteen or Friday or a howling dog has dangerous significance to them: like the witty Frenchwoman they might confess that, though they do not believe in ghosts, they are afraid of them.

This, our every-day life then, appears to be but a small portion of the great whole, of life invisible, of thought affecting our thought: it is like an island in the Atlantic. And that larger world which touches us now and then to scare us may, and probably does, have relations to us which we should try to understand and adapt ourselves to—beneficent relations, kindly relations, relations at least symbolised by the phrase of faith, "the Fatherhood of God." I suppose it is impossible for most of us, in this world which has been shown us by the new physical science, so vast that we cannot, as our forefathers could, put our fingers upon the spot

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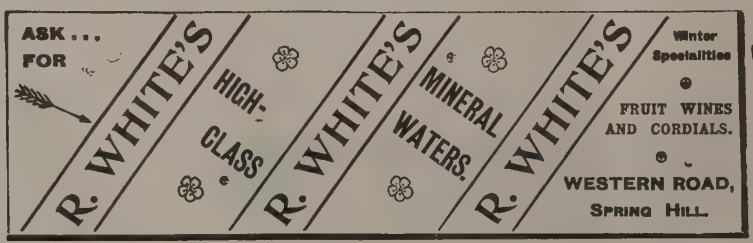

where heaven is and where God sits upon a throne, to possess the simple trust which was in their souls who wrote the old hymns and built cathedrals, who in their piety felt sure that every ill which befell them, as well as every commonplace good, was sent by God as a special message of warning or encouragement. In shipwreck or in prison, in smallpox or famine, God singled them out for some particular use, as a general despatches his most trusty aid on the most arduous and dangerous errands for the safety of the campaign.

But we may recognise that the world is divinely ordered and that we are intelligent parts of it, not often indeed permitted to see what we do for the whole scheme, but co-operating according to the measure of our sincere good will. The central need of life is that we believe that each of us is set to do a characteristic piece of work in the Almighty's work-shop, and that we shall have some sort of adequate reward if we do it in our best way.

We must have the transforming motive if we are to get a reasonable portion of contentment with our lot; and reverence for its special opportunity, and the widest spread of all great motives, that which has made history resplendent with its heroes and martyrs, is the faith which comes to the rescue when plain, everyday motives have lost their freshness, and remind the soul that it is in God's service, at God's post of duty, building not merely houses of wood and brick, but structures which defy time's corroding tooth.

G. A. T.

The Meridian of Life.

It is frequently asserted by psychologists that the person who has reached the age of forty-five is incapable of accepting new ideas or of making a radical change in the purposes of life. This assertion is based on the physiological fact that at about that age the physical capacities reach their highest limit, and from that time expenditure gradually increases upon income. It is evident, however, that psychological development is taken to be synonymous with the physiological, which is by no means the case. It does not follow that, because the body has ceased to grow, or because it has reached a period when there is gradual decrease in the physical powers, the mind has also attained its acme of capacity. The instances are too many of men who have continued with unabated mental powers to the age of seventy or even eighty years of age to give warrant to any dogmatic assertion as to the age limit. Many men have reached the fulness of their powers only after sixty, and others continue to gain in influence and even in mental vigour far beyond that age. These are facts of biography and of history, and no scientific theory can gainsay their truth.

It seems to be a fairly well-established truth that what is called conversion in the large majority of instances, takes place in comparative youth. There are not wanting instances, however, of men and women who have gone through this experience in middle age, or even at an advanced period of life. Radical changes in the moral, mental, and spiritual purposes of life may come to the individual at any age, as numberless instances prove. Many cases can be cited of persons who have taken up new studies when advanced in life; and many inventors, discoverers, and political leaders have suddenly showed great gifts at a time far removed from youth. In a word, juvenility is not essential to mental growth and power.

Much depends on what the previous life has been. It is improbable that the man who has not been a student before the age of fifty will become one after that date, and it is almost certain that he will not become an original investigator and discoverer. If a workman has been employed until middle age in any one of the unskilled forms of labour that the factory system has developed, repeating the same mechanical act day after day for years, we do not anticipate that he will then show forth remarkable inventive genius. But the man who has been a student from his youth up along wide ranges of inquiry may take up new subjects at any time, with certainty of success in their mastery. The workman who has had an all-round training in mechanics, whose hands and whose mind have been kept flexible by varied interests and employments, may dis-

cover even in old age an inventive skill of a high order.

Many instances can be cited of authors, scientists, professional men, political leaders, who have laboured with little success until approaching old age before accomplishing any work that has given them fame and an assured place in their calling. This means that they have done their best work only after the physical powers have begun to decay. Especially is this true of men of great originality, that they are obliged to educate the public to recognise them. If their powers failed when the body ceases to grow, ultimate success would be impossible for them; but, because the mind remains vigorous far beyond the age limit, they at last secure the fame they deserve.

The significance of the law of the age limit is that the mind decays with the body unless it is kept vigorously alive by varied interests and occupations. Even the physical powers need not wane until the individual is far beyond middle age, if one has rightly used and controlled his body. Men who have reached old age, will do more work, and more easily, than in youth, if they have had regard to the laws of physical development and health. Wise, trustful, and virtuous living insures to the mind an old age of power and accomplishment. We do not die at the top first, as Swift said of himself, unless we have abused ourselves or in some way failed to keep the law of life.

The Four-leaf Clover.

I KNOW a place where the sun is like gold
And the cherry blooms burst with snow,
And down underneath is the loveliest nook
Where the four-leaf clovers grow.

One leaf is for hope, and one is for faith,
And one is for love you know,
And God put another in for luck—
If you search you will find where they grow.

But you must have hope and you must have faith,
You must love and be strong—and so—
If you work, if you wait, you will find the place
Where the four-leaf clovers grow.

ELLA HIGGINSON.

For the Children.

Which are You?

Two boys went to gather grapes. One was happy because they found grapes. The other was unhappy because the grapes had seeds in them.

Two men, being convalescent, were asked how they were. One said, "I am better today." The other said, "I was worse yesterday."

When it rains, one man says, "This will make mud"; another, "This will lay the dust."

Two boys examined a bush. One observed that it had a thorn; the other, that it had a rose.

Two children looking through coloured glasses, one said, "The world is blue"; and the other said, "It is bright."

Two boys having a bee, one got honey, the other got stung. The first called it a honey bee; the other, a stinging bee.

"I am glad that I live," says one man. "I am sorry I must die," says another.

"I am glad," says one, "that it is no worse." "I am sorry," says another, "that it is no better."

One says, "Our good is mixed with evil." Another says, "Our evil is mixed with good."

Sir Robin the Bold.

IN the busiest part of the town of Coventry, at the corner of two streets where electric cars are running, and people are passing to and fro the whole day long, there is a large confectioner's shop. One cold morning last November, my friend was just about to enter this shop, when, to her great surprise, she saw a robin come flying down from the house-top opposite, pick its way between the people who were crowding the sidewalk, hop cheerfully up the doorstep of the shop, and disappear within. Of course she supposed it was a pet bird; but, when she followed Sir Robin inside the shop, the people told her they had never seen the bird before!

There he was, however, apparently quite at home, and happy as a prince, feasting on the abundant crumbs to be had for the taking. Customers coming and going didn't seem to disturb him in the least; it was as if he had taken a good view of the shop from his house-top before he came in, and so knew exactly what to expect.

When he had finished his meal, he made his way from shelf to shelf, till he found a dressing-room to his taste. Then, after preening his feathers and showing off his rich-coloured little self to the best advantage (as all bipeds, feathered or unfeathered, are wont to do), Sir Robin proved his good breeding by paying for his entertainment with a song. My friend left him singing away and everybody listening.

About a week later she called at the confectioner's again, and there was Robin, large as life, bolder and more at home than ever! He would take his bath quite fearlessly in a saucer of water which was placed for him every morning on the floor. He hopped about the shelves all day, picking up the crumbs he liked best (for of course in such a place he had quite a choice), and even at night he remained in the shop. One of the girls told my friend she had tried to see if she could get him out one night, but he refused to go. It really looked as if Sir Robin had determined to spend the winter in his snug quarters.

So famous did he become that the Coventry newspapers talked about him and his curious ways, and there is no knowing how much extra business he might have brought to that shop (for of course everybody in the town wanted to see him), if it hadn't been for an enemy in the camp. This enemy was the confectioner's cat. When Sir Robin first stepped upon the stage, she had not welcomed him very warmly—in fact, there had been some little unpleasantness between them. But afterwards Puss seemed to understand that, whatever her own private feelings might be, she and Robin were expected to be friends—or, at all events, to keep the peace.

Robin, for his part, was quite willing to have it so, and placed full confidence in Puss's good faith. For, knowing as he was, he *didn't* know how crafty a cat can be. And it came about that exactly two weeks from the day that Robin entered the confectioner's shop Puss had the meal she had set her treacherous heart on!

Poor, plucky, trusting Sir Robin! That was a sad, sad ending to his little tale!

News from the Field.

Before entering on his work at the Bristol Domestic Mission, *Mr. Graham* has received good gifts and warmest good wishes from his friends at *Todmorden*, where his valuable services have been greatly appreciated. The *Rev. H. S. Solly, M.A.*, has begun his new ministry at *Poole*. The *Rev. F. A. Homer* has been welcomed at *West Bromwich*. *Mr. F. Munn*, on completing his studies at the *Home Missionary College*, has accepted a call to *Greyabbey, Ireland*. The *Rev. F. B. Mott* has agreed to take up the work at *Cardiff*. The Rev. W. L. Tucker, M.A., is to occupy the pulpit at *Bridport*. The *Rev. A. Thornhill, M.A.*, goes to *Dob Lane, Manchester*, and the *Rev. M. R. Scott* to *Southport*. The Rev. R. H. Lambley, M.A., has resigned the pulpit at *Melbourne*, and comes back to take up work somewhere in *England*.

In these various ways our ministers and congregations are adjusting themselves to new conditions, and preparing for the work of the future.

The *Southern Unitarian Association* has held a useful meeting at *Southampton*, under the Presidency of the *Rev. C. C. Coe*.

The four *Vans* on their rounds throughout the country have, on the whole, been well received, and, in some cases, the audiences have been large and attentive; while everywhere there have been indications that great interest has been excited, and much inquiry stimulated. More people are being reached in this way, people who are outside our congregations, and perhaps all congregations, than by any other agencies at our command. It is impossible not to be deeply interested in the romantic history of these travelling pulpits, and the brave men who speak to their strange congregations.

We congratulate our friends at *Stourbridge* on the foundation stonelaying of their new School and Lecture Hall Buildings, and the presence of the President of the British and Foreign Association, Sir W. B. Bowring, Bart., who spoke cheery and encouraging words on the occasion. With these added buildings, the energetic

minister will be able to do a much larger work among the people with whom his lot is cast.

We are glad to see that the late *Mrs. Miller*, of *Hampstead*, has bequeathed £300 to the British and Foreign Association; and that *Mr. A. W. Worthington, B.A.*, so long and so honourably associated with all the good work of our people, has left £500 for the Ministers' Sustentation Fund, and £100 to the College at Oxford. These are encouraging examples of helpfulness which others would do well to follow.

Great interest was manifested at *Oxford* in the meetings of the National Association for the promotion of social service and greater interest still has been caused to a larger circle by the publication of the interesting papers and addresses in our weekly papers. The friends who feel deeply with regard to the social problems which confront us every day, are rejoiced at the attitude taken up by the earnest group who are studying these matters in such an earnest and practical way.

During the present month a considerable body of our Ministers and Laity are wending their way across the seas to *Canada* and the *United States* to meet and confer with friends of Liberal Religion in the Western world. Many friends are going from various parts of *Europe* and *Asia*, and there seems to be every probability that from the conference of good men and women prejudices will be broken down and avenues of usefulness opened out, which will lead to a wider communion and the development of a true catholicity in the world. We hope the swift ships and hurrying trains will carry our pilgrims safely, and that good-will and true brotherhood may follow from all the gatherings.

The addresses delivered by the Visitors at our three Colleges were all worthy of serious attention, and not the least important of these was that delivered by *Dr. G. Dawes-Hicks*, at *Carmarthen*. We commend them all to the attention of our readers. It would be well if they could all be published together in a pamphlet for wide-spread circulation.

The *Missionary Conference* grows in usefulness and importance year by year. It has now a membership of 120 members, and it should attract to itself all others who care for the wide, active, and progressive work which, happily, is increasing among us. It is only within the last half century that this side of our work has been steadily growing in force, and it is by work such as this that we may look for our substantial growth in the future.

Two of our venerable co-workers, and patient labourers, have passed from our midst since we last went to press—notable laymen, who in their own localities have illustrated the beauty of our religious life and work, and shown how truly we may do our work in the world, and lay up treasures in heaven. These venerable men were *William Healy, J.P.*, of *Heywood*, who was at the beginning of our mission in Heywood, and who unwaveringly stood by it and worked for its development and success even to the day of his death; and *Thomas Greenfield*, of *Sunderland*, who for more than 60 years gave faithful service to our struggling cause at *Sunderland*. Men like these stand out among us, and deserve all honour in their lives and grateful recognition when they pass away from us. On the roll of honour we respectfully inscribe their names.

SCRUTATOR.

Aug. 15th, 1907.

No impulse is too splendid for the simplest task: no task is too simple for the most splendid impulse.—*Phillips Brooks.*

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